

**An Archaeological Survey of the
Ray Bon Subdivision
Bexar County, Texas**

by

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Submitted to

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Introduction

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted an archeological survey of the 12.73 acres planned for development by Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc. on October 31, 2005. The work was performed by Drs. Harry Shafer and Thomas Hester. The assessment was carried out in accordance with the "Archeological Survey Standards for Texas" in order to assess the significance of any site recorded on the property regarding consideration for nomination to National Register of Historic Places. The survey consisted of a 100% surface inspection, including a close inspection of the vertical profiles provided by three large drainage ditches that transect the property. A "no collecting" policy was followed during the survey. That is to say, artifacts observed in the field were digitally photographed and replaced.

The project area lies in the coastal prairies in northeast San Antonio. This once fertile farm land has long been engulfed in the urban expansion of greater San Antonio area. The property lies near the upper headwaters of Rosillo Creek which flows east of the property. Soils in the project area are Lewisville silty clay (0-1 percent slopes), a productive agricultural soil (Taylor et al. 1991). The bedrock formation is Austin chalk.

Archaeological Background

Although over 1400 archaeological sites are recorded in Bexar County (data from the Texas Archeological Site Atlas, Texas Historical Commission). These sites reflect at least 11,200 years of human occupation in the region (see Hester 2004). The earliest, known as **Paleoindian**, began in the last part of the Pleistocene and ended around 8800 years ago as the area transitioned into environments similar to the present day. A long era of hunting and gathering by groups of ancient Native Americans is termed the **Archaic**, from 8800-1500 years ago. Abundant evidence of such occupations, especially campsites with cooking hearths and spear points, knives, and choppers of chipped flint have been recorded in large numbers. Changes in the archaeological record are observed around 1500 years ago (**Late Prehistoric**), with the appearance of the bow and arrow, a shift to bison-hunting, and a new suite of artifact types, including arrow points, specialized knives and scrapers, and pottery. In the late 1600s and early 1700s, many of the local Native American peoples were subsequently incorporated into the Spanish mission populations in San Antonio. This **Historic** period was marked, in the early and mid 18th century, by the incursion of Lipan Apache and Comanche groups. However, the most distinctive aspect of the Historic period are the many structures linked to the Spanish Colonial era of San Antonio, and the many notable buildings from later times, from the early 1800s through the early 1900s.

The long culture history of the San Antonio area remains poorly known, however, in the area to the east/northeast of Interstate 35 where there has been very little archaeological

research. Indeed, in the general Ray-Bon vicinity, there are no previously documented sites, historic structures, or other cultural resources of significance. Given the presence of a small tributary of upper Rosillo Creek, east of the survey area, and to the south and east, the Martinez Creek system, it can be expected that prehistoric archaeological remains were present. Many sites may have already been eliminated by housing developments. However, the sites may be difficult to recognize, as they were likely very ephemeral in nature, representing brief use of upland areas for specialized plant collecting and hunting. Shafer (2005) and Shafer and Hester (2004) have recorded such a pattern to the east and south in the Martinez Creek system.

Survey Results

The property is bounded by Ray Bon drive on the west, Midcrown Drive and Rosillo Creek floodplain on the east, and developed property on the north. The land has been thoroughly disturbed by several modification projects. The shallow Lewisville soils have been scraped down to the underlying Austin chalk bedrock in places within the property, and the spoil was piled up in the northeast portion of the property. The main part of the property (Lot 105 Block 13) is drained by three large drainage ditches (Fig. 1). One borders the property on the north from Ray Bon Drive east; another borders the property on the south from Ray Bon Drive east where it intersects with east drainage access. The east drainage access is an extension of the northern east-west ditch and eventually empties into Rosillo Creek.

Spoil piles containing construction debris were observed in the southern part of Block 105, and a large mound of spoil provides a high point to the property in the northwest portion of Lot 105 (Fig. 2). Natural lithic materials observed in the scraped surfaces include Austin chalk, nodules of hematite, and a few chert nodules and cobbles, probably of Uvalde gravels. Scattered across the surface of the area was a variety of modern Debris, pieces of macadam, and occasional examples of naturally-fractured cherts. The profiles of drainage ditches on the lot provided exposed and eroded surfaces that could be checked for evidence of buried cultural material. Additionally, the east-west drainage ditch at the south end of the lot also provided a look at the geological stratigraphy (Fig. 3).

The only evidence of prehistoric cultural activity observed on the property was a single small, thick bifacially flaked chert (flint) artifact (Fig.4). This may either be an exhausted tool such as a small axe or adze, or, more likely, a failed attempted to manufacture another tool form. Regardless, it is an unmistakable artifact.

Assessment and Recommendations

The pedestrian survey of the Ray Bon Subdivision property by Abasolo Archaeological Consultants recorded a trace of prehistoric archaeological activity, but no significant archaeological or historical sites. The property has been so thoroughly modified by the cut and fill of three large drainage ditches that had a site been present, it would have been severely damaged or destroyed. The archaeological survey of the Ray Bon Subdivision

property yielded no evidence that development of this property would significantly impact archaeological or historical resources

References Cited

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FIGURES

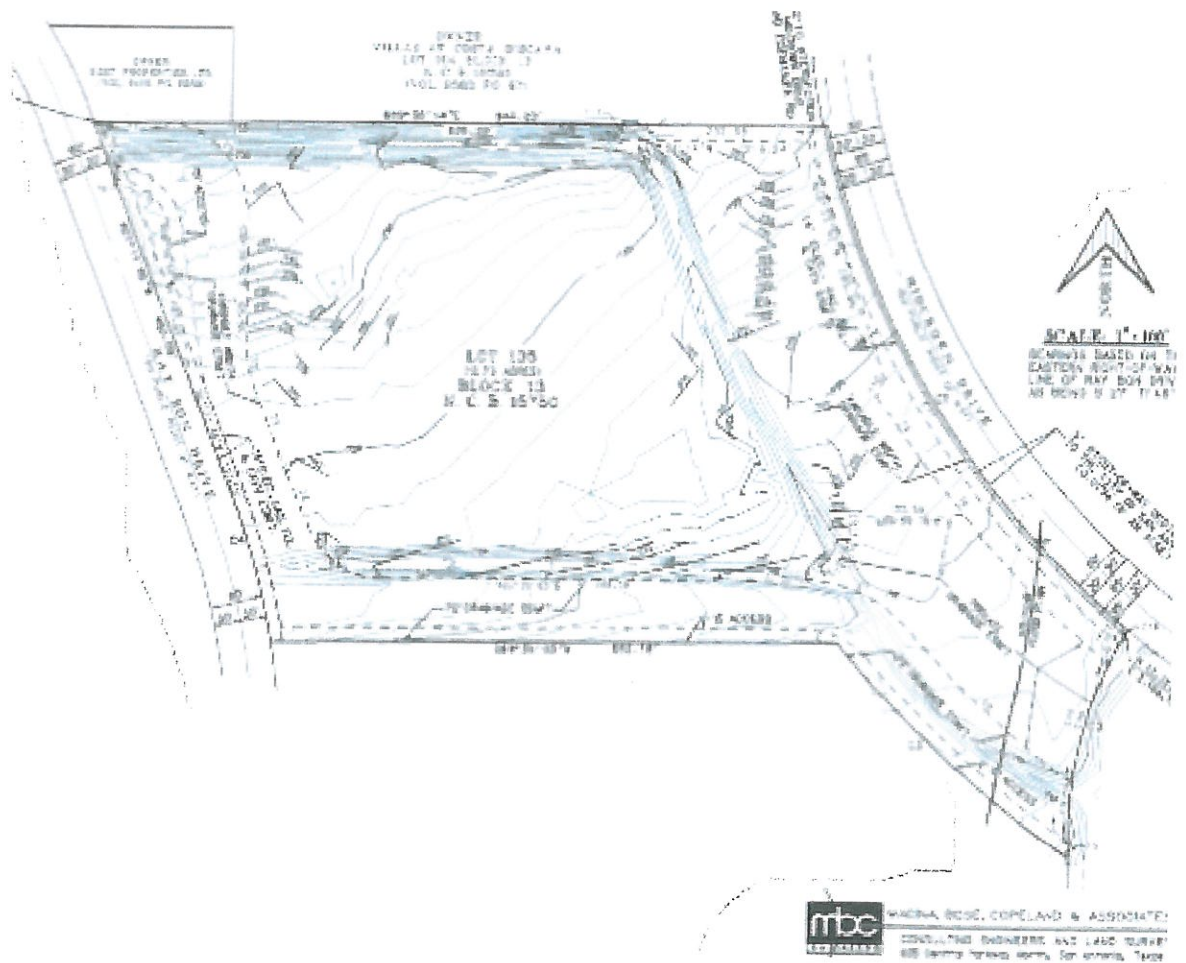


Figure 1. Map of the project area, adopted from plan provided by Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc.



Figure 2. View of large spoil mound on the northwest portion of the property.



Figure 3. South (east-west) drainage ditch profile showing shallow soil mantle.



Figure 4. Prehistoric chipped stone artifact recorded near the south drainage ditch.